May 12, 2024 | Flash Brief

Hamas Targets Kerem Shalom Aid Crossing and Israeli City of Ashkelon

Latest Developments

Israel's Iron Dome air defense system **intercepted** two rockets launched from Rafah toward the Kerem Shalom area in Israel on May 12, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said. No damage or injuries resulted. Terrorists have **attacked** the Kerem Shalom crossing, which **facilitates** the entry of most aid into Gaza, **six** times since May 5, when a Hamas rocket attack **killed** four Israeli soldiers, wounded 10 others, and temporarily closed the crossing.

On May 6, the IDF **launched** an offensive into eastern Rafah in response to the initial rocket fire. The World Food Programme has not issued statements on its website or X accounts explicitly **condemning** any of Hamas's attacks on the Kerem Shalom crossing, but instead expressed concern over the crossing's closure.

Additionally, terrorists in Gaza **attacked** the Israeli city of Ashkelon with rockets **overnight** between May 11 and May 12 and also in the afternoon of May 12. The strike **damaged** an apartment building but no casualties resulted. The rocket fire from Gaza is part of an increase in rocket attacks over the past week, including on May 11, when Hamas **fired** rockets at the Israeli city of Beersheba.

Expert Analysis

"Hamas has continued to target the Kerem Shalom crossing, where humanitarian aid enters Gaza. This is part of the cynical Hamas strategy to try to cut off humanitarian aid to Gaza and increase the suffering of Gazans. Hamas has attempted to hijack and exploit humanitarian aid entering Gaza throughout the war, and it is essential that the terrorist group be prevented from causing further harm to humanitarian aid crossings." — ***Seth J. Frantzman**, FDD Adjunct Fellow*

"Despite over seven months of sustained Israeli military operations, Hamas is not under enough pressure to radically change its behavior. In effect, Hamas understands that it can fire on Kerem Shalom and the nearby crossing without significant consequences. Lacking tangible repercussions, both militarily and politically, Hamas will persist with its current strategy and endanger the transfer of aid to Palestinians." — ***Joe Truzman**, Senior Research Analyst at FDD's Long War Journal*

IDF Expands Operations Against Terrorists in Jabalya

Israel called on civilians to **evacuate** the neighborhood of Jabaliya, north of Gaza City, on May 11. "You are in a dangerous combat zone. Hamas is trying to rebuild its capabilities in the region, and therefore the IDF will operate with great force against the terrorist organizations in the region in which you are located, and therefore everyone who is in those areas exposes themselves and their families to danger," the IDF **informed** residents in a post on its Arabic language social media account.

The IDF **struck** approximately 30 terrorist targets in Jabalya overnight between May 11 and 12, before Israeli troops began operating in the neighborhood. Additionally, the IDF continued to **dismantle** terrorist infrastructure in the Zaytun neighborhood, near Gaza City. Across Gaza, Israeli forces eliminated "ready-to-fire rocket launches, weapon storage facilities, observation posts, tunnel shafts, and additional terrorist infrastructure," **according** to the IDF.

Related Analysis

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